

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 15-30 are presented for the Examiner's consideration. These claims are directed to a niobium powder containing niobium monoxide crystal or hexaniobium monoxide crystal. The niobium powder containing at least either one of niobium monoxide crystal and hexaniobium monoxide crystal as prepared in Examples 9 and 10 shows a higher temperature property than a niobium powder not containing niobium monoxide crystal or hexaniobium monoxide crystal as prepared in Comparative Example 1 (see Table 1). Support for claims 16-17 is found, for example, in paragraph [39] of the specification.

Entry of the Amendments and the Examiner's favorable consideration of claims 15-30 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Abraham J. Rosner
Registration No. 33,276

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: October 2, 2003